

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cessford other _____
names/site number VDHR Number 214-0001

2. Location

street & number 16546 Courthouse Road not for publication _____
city or town Eastville vicinity _____
state Virginia code VA county Northampton code 131 Zip 23347

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register

_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined eligible for the
National Register

_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined not eligible for the National Register

_____ removed from the National Register

_____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceCessford
Northampton County, Virginia

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u> buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 5 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

 N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> Domestic </u>	Sub: <u> Single Dwelling </u>
<u> Domestic </u>	<u> Secondary Structure </u>
<u> Landscape </u>	<u> Garden </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> Domestic </u>	Sub: <u> Single Dwelling </u>
<u> Domestic </u>	<u> Secondary Structure </u>
<u> Agricultural Subsistence </u>	<u> Storage </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

☐ Federal _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation ☐ Brick _____
roof ☐ Slate _____
walls ☐ Brick _____

other ☐ Wood, Aluminum _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

☐ Architecture _____
☐ Social History; Landscape Architecture; Military _____

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

Period of Significance _ 1801-1892 _____

Significant Dates 1801 _____
_ 1832/34 _____
_ 1862 _____
_ 1892 _____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder _ Unknown _____

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: _ Archives Department, Eastern Shore of Virginia Historical Society; Northampton County Clerk's Office _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___5___

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting	North	Zone Easting	North
1 18 416000 4133890	2 _____		
3 _____	4 _____		

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jean M. Mihalyka with assistance from Mary C. Taylor

Organization: _____ date 20 June, 2003

street & number: P.O. Box 517 telephone 757/331-1627

city or town Cheriton state VA zip code 23316

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ellen S. Dix

street & number P.O. Box 98 telephone 757/678-5695

city or town Eastville state VA zip code 33147

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

Section _7_ Page _1_

Summary Description:

Situated on five acres at the edge of Eastville in Northampton County, Virginia, this house was built c. 1801¹ and bought by Dr. John Kerr c. 1832. The brick Federal home stands two and a half stories laid in Flemish bond brick with central pedimented porches on the north and south facades. There are five pedimented gable dormers projecting from the slate shingle roof. A wide central hall distinguishes the interior with a stairway ascending through to the third floor. The two large mantels on each floor are identical and consist of rounded columns at each side with horizontal fluting across the face and a circular decoration at each end. The west two-story brick section was added to the house, historically sometime after the c. 1801 mansion was built. The addition contains a sitting room and kitchen on the first floor with a narrow stairway leading to the cook's quarters on the second floor. The kitchen retains its original large fireplace with two iron cranes and hooks. To the west of the addition are what remains of the utility complex; a smokehouse, a quarter kitchen and a utility building. Enough of the garden also remains to discern the original pattern. Cessford embodies the artistic attributes associated with the homes of the affluent planter class.

Detailed Exterior Description

The c.1801 house is erected upon a brick foundation with a full brick floored cellar. The home with five bays has walls laid in Flemish bond and contains two and a half stories below a gable roof with five dormers. The foundation above ground level on the south side has four small windows framed with wooden slats. The same fenestration of four nine over nine light windows, with wooden lintels and carved concentric decorations (bulls eyes) at the ends follows on the north and south sides. The sills are plain. The central second floor window is a larger nine over nine light window with two pilasters separating the main windows from the six light panels on each side. The dormer windows have fluted pilasters with Doric capitals supporting the pediment gable roof with smaller six over six lights. The east elevation has no cellar windows but four windows which match the other nine over nine ones on the north and south. These elevations display exact symmetry.

The entrance to the cellar is on the west end with one window above it. All but the dormers have rather narrow shutters with horizontal slats. Some of the iron holdbacks still remain. On the south and north facades above the modillions and under the eaves is a row of dentils with a circular cutout above each.² The ends of the house have only a row of small dentils spaced closely together under the cornice.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

Section 7 Page 2

The gable roof is covered with slate, which was put on in the 1930s, replacing the original cypress shakes.³ There are large interior chimneys built in the center ends, capped by four brick courses that flare outward.

Two large screened porches paved with brick stretchers serve as entrances to the north and south main doors. Originally the porches had only a wooden railing. A brick arch supports the brick foundation. Each porch has a pair of slender Roman Doric columns to the front with two pilasters against the house wall, which support the unadorned wooden segmented pediment and gable roof.⁴

Detailed Interior Description

The house is laid out on a center hall plan with a large room to each side. The hand carving is not elaborate. However, all of the interior doorframes do have fluting with narrower horizontal fluting ending with the bulls-eye.⁵ The doors on the first floor are painted white with the exception of the back of the parlor door, which still has its original faux-graining. These tall raised panel doors are in harmony with the 14-foot ceilings. The large entrance doors have transoms and sidelights featuring wooden muntins in a pattern of half circles back to back.⁶ The circular curves are repeated on the spandrels, which rise from the right side of the wide hall to the third floor. The newel post and balustrades are of birds-eye maple to contrast with the mahogany railing. The four mantels are alike. They have rounded columns at each side with horizontal fluting across the face except for a circular decoration at each side. Two are painted white but were originally black. The fireplace surround is black marble.⁷

The tall windows (54"x35") have paneled wainscoting from the especially broad baseboards to the sill.⁸ Each room has a wide cornice. The wallpaper and border in the parlor purchased in 1859 remains on the wall.⁹

The second floor has 13-foot ceilings. At the top of the stairs there is a hall and a bathroom that has been made from the original wide hallway. The room features the large south central window with six pane sidelights. It reflects the window above the stair landing on the north façade. Two large bedchambers are entered from either side of the hall. The stairs proceed to the third floor, which has a small hall leading to a room on each side. All floors are heart pine.

Section 7 Page 3

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

Addition to Main Dwelling

It has not been possible to ascertain the date for the addition. Two thousand bricks were included in John Ker's 1847 inventory and sales. They could have been left from building the kitchen addition. Also recorded are numerous items labeled "from the kitchen". However, it is obvious that the west section of Cessford was added sometime after the completion of the c. 1801 dwelling. It was built against the west wall and although in the same Flemish bond, the bricks do not exactly align. Said bricks appear more salmon in color when compared with the richer, reddish hue of the main mansion. The surface of the stretchers is a bit fuller, more rounded, and softer in texture.

The south wall covers one fourth of the left-hand bulls-eye decorative block of the lintel over the cellar door to the main house. As it continues upward, the wall is built to the very edge of the shutter on the c. 1801 window.

The addition consists of only two stories built over a dirt-floored cellar entered by a large door under the more easterly window. Much plainer than the main section, the south façade has three bays with a central plain door. A modern metal canopy covers the door and part of the wooden lintel with the bulls eye design. The north side has two bays evenly spaced. The four first floor windows have nine over nine lights and the second floor has diminished size windows with six over six lights. Wooden lintels with the familiar bulls-eye are above each window with a plain lintel below. Only a single wood molding is under the eaves of a lower gable roof. The chimney tops the west end, which has no windows.

The door enters directly into the den or sitting room with the kitchen to the right. The rooms were built as a kitchen and pantry. The very large fireplace still holds two iron cranes and hooks. The wide mantel of heart pine was made from the shelving originally in the pantry. Wood paneling has been applied against the original plastered walls.

A small narrow stairway leads from the present kitchen to a bedroom and bath above. This was built as two rooms for the cook. The bath was cut off at a later date from the small room at the top of the stairs.¹⁰

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

Outbuildings

Directly west of the addition are a smokehouse, a quarter kitchen and an utility/out-building. Originally the complex included two quarters for cooking and housing slaves, a corner crib, two barns and a smokehouse.¹¹ Slave quarters stood within or nearby the complex. Both John and George Kerr owned many slaves.¹² The existing structures are in need of repairs. The smokehouse rests on a foot high brick foundation and is constructed of beaded weatherboards. The roof is sharply pitched and was covered with cypress shingles, but now has asphalt ones. It has a wide, plain cornice. The gabled ends each feature a square slatted window near the top of the building. An iron square holds two horizontal iron bars in each. The opening is now boarded on the inside. The front of the building is wider than the ends. It has a large, heavy door in the center. It is necessary to step down as you enter. The floor is dirt. There is a trough to hold the salt while curing and a fire ring in the center to smoke the meats. Nails and hooks on the heavy rafters still remain for hanging the meat for smoking and final storage.

The quarter kitchen rests on a 14" brick foundation (now broken in various areas) and is covered with 7" beaded weatherboards. The cat-slide roof was shingled with cypress and now has asphalt ones. There is a simple cornice, which extends out from the front roof. The door is tall but narrow with a window on either side as well as one on the east side – all with 6 over 6 lights. The back room has a smaller window on the sides and back. The most distinguishing feature is the massive freestanding chimney on the west side. It has a 17" base topped with a row of headers where the chimney begins. The chimney follows the wall up for about 5' and then separates from the wall for a 3 brick width space. On either side of the chimney are windows with 2 over 2 lights. The fireplace in the front room is far larger than the one in the mansion. The stairway to the second floor room no longer exists but it is said to have been in the southeast corner of the front room. The interior was "renovated" c.1948 by Mrs. Ailworth who entertained her church guild and others there.¹³ However, what can be seen of the original window and door framing is very plain and utilitarian.

The last of the three remaining buildings is the most plain. It is now used to store a large mower. It stands on brick supports, is 10'x16' and is boarded with very wide boards (14" wide in some places). The rafters extend from the building under the roof on the east and west sides. The front façade has a wide door, which extends to ground level. A window-like opening above the door is near the top under the gabled roof. This opening is slatted with eight slats slanting downward.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

Nothing remains within besides nails and hooks on the upright supports. It is said to have housed chickens or other small animals when the complex was in use.¹⁴

Garden

The south porch aligns with the wide path running through the garden. From receipts in the Kerr Papers it is known that it existed in the early 1850's. George Ker (Dr. John Kerr's son, George, dropped the second 'R' from his name in the 1850's) was buying roses and flowering plants for it at that time.¹⁵ Chandlee Forman states "there is nothing left of the original great box circle and only a portion of one of the four small circles still remains. One large boxwood still exists to the right of the path running south which still has original box half way down its length."¹⁶ Boxwood has been replaced in the 20th century, which fill in the original plan to some extent.

Changes and Alterations to Cessford

Only a few changes have been made to Cessford. Three bathrooms have been added. One smaller bath was cut off from the room over the pantry in 1924/5. It is believed that in 1958, one full bath was made from the large second floor hallway and the coat closet under the stairs in the main floor hall was made into a powder room.

The kitchen was moved to the original pantry in 1958. The closed fireplace was opened, a mantel added and the walls paneled. The original kitchen was then used as a den.

As facilities became available, electricity, central heat, air conditioning, public water, and sewerage were installed. The porches were screened.¹⁷ All alterations were made with a minimum of disturbance to the integrity of the house. With the above exceptions, Cessford remains essentially as it were built.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

Summary

Cessford holds historical significance in its architecture by retaining much of its integrity and in its part in the social history of Northampton County on Virginia's Eastern Shore. Constructed c. 1801 and bought by John Kerr c. 1832, Cessford stands as a testament to the craftsmanship of Federal architecture and Virginia artisans. Following John Kerr's death in 1857, George Kerr, his son, took ownership of the property. In 1861, the Union army began occupying the Eastern Shore counties. George Kerr entrusted his property to William P. Nottingham and fled the area. On July 23, 1862, Brigadier General Henry H. Lockwood commandeered the property for his headquarters and remained in residence of the property throughout the war with the Kerr family able to return in 1865. Following the Kerr ownership, Cessford was left to the Ailworth family, where it remains today. Although the property has modern updates such as electricity and plumbing, a majority of the original fabric of the building remains. The home contains the original hand carved mantels, window and doorframes as well as the original floors. There are also three contributing original outbuildings. Cessford is eligible for listing under criteria A for Social History and C for Architecture.

Criteria A: That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

John Kerr grew up in Accomack County as the son of Reverend George Kerr whose brother John Shepherd Kerr built "Kerr Place", the Georgian mansion now the home of the Eastern Shore Historical Society. They were landed gentry, married well, and traveled in the most affluent society. John Kerr soon became a leader of the elite planter class. He was well-educated, studied medicine, was able to lend money and by 1826 held a mortgage on Edward Stratton's Elkington Plantation, a large plantation just south of Eastville.¹⁸ By 1827 he was a Justice of the Peace.¹⁹ He was able in 1832 to buy at auction the Mill Quarter section of Elkington. He thus acquired 359 36/100 acres. Like his ancestors, it is believed he built a large mansion c. 1832, which he named Cessford after an ancestral home in Scotland. In an intensive survey done of the property in 1996, by Dames and Moore, a construction date of 1801 is noted²⁰. Documentation for this date has not been found.

Section 8 Page 7

John Kerr practiced medicine, managed a farm and was prominent in financial circles – lending money and charging interest on numerous notes. Following a petition to the General Assembly in

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

1851 to remove black people from Virginia he was selected to serve on two committees to investigate the problem.²¹ Dr. Kerr died in 1847 and the title passed to his second eldest son, George Kerr who was 22 and unmarried.

George Ker assumed ownership and guardianship of his seven younger brothers.²² He administered the large property and slaves as well as his own medical practice. Eventually, George Ker was able to buy out the interests of his sister and two brothers in the farm. He went on to become the part owner of a mercantile business and a castor bean mill. His lifestyle was secure until the onset of the Civil War when the Union army began occupying the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The Union army felt it was important to occupy the two Eastern Shore counties of Northampton and Accomack for four reasons.²³ They felt it was necessary to pacify Maryland's Eastern Shore, who was fearful of southern attacks. They wanted to run a telegraph line from Maryland through Accomack County and into Northampton County to Cherrystone and from there across the Chesapeake Bay to Fortress Monroe. Cherrystone Creek was the largest and deepest waterway in Northampton County and was located only 6.7 miles south of Eastville and Cessford. The Union army was interested in these counties to assist them in the blockade of the surrounding waters. These counties were also known for their growth of oats, which were necessary to feed the horses assisting the cavalry in occupation there as well as Union forces farther North and West.

Dr. Ker closed his home in the fall of 1861, entrusting it and his affairs to William P. Nottingham, who lived just north of Eastville at Hickory Grounds.²⁴ In November, the Kers left the shore with the Howards of Coventon in a sloop having to pass through the Federal Blockading Squadron to reach the mouth of the York River where Confederate batteries were on both sides. To avoid any noise, they gave the children strong but safe doses of paregoric, which kept them asleep throughout the night.²⁵ The Ker's fled to Oxford, North Carolina and boarded with an Episcopal minister.²⁶ Mrs. Ker returned to the Eastern Shore before 1864 and Dr. Ker returned early in 1865 where they lived the Nottingham's until the Union occupation ended.²⁷

Section __8__ Page __8__

Brigadier General Henry H. Lockwood, Commander of the Union Army in Northampton County needed housing for himself and his staff during their occupation of the Eastern Shore. The county seat in Eastville offered a satisfactory hub for his headquarters. It was centrally located between the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

bay and the ocean in the midst of the blockade area. More importantly it was just 6.7 miles north of Cherrystone, the terminal for connecting the peninsula to the Western Shore by telegraph. Cessford was the largest, most prestigious residence in the town. On July 23, 1862, Commander Lockwood notified Mr. Nottingham of his intentions to occupy Cessford as his headquarters.

Mr. William P. Nottingham – It is my intention to occupy for myself and staff the late dwelling of Dr. Ker in the lower part of the village. As I am informed that the furniture and fixtures of the house are in your keeping, I request that they be returned to the house. I further desire that you will take an inventory of all property in the house – acting conjointly with an officer whom I will name. I will state that the occupation of the house will in no wise interrupt or interfere with the farm or crops thereon.²⁸

Commander Lockwood brought his family and staff to live in Cessford and remained true to his notice of intention by not destroying the furniture or home when his occupation ended. However, he did severely damage the family's livelihood when he posted a notice freeing Dr. Ker's slaves.

To W.P. Nottingham agent of the estate of Dr. G. Ker. You will take notice that the slaves of the above estate will not longer be held otherwise than as freemen and with his own consent. The proclamation of the President of the 22nd inst. calling attention to the act of July 17th 1860 requires all officers to enforce said act. Here after neither individuals nor the civil government will be permitted to retain as slaves any of those whose masters have deserted them.²⁹

Freedom for Dr. Ker's slaves meant he was left with no work force for his plantation once he returned to Cessford in 1865. Dr. Ker used his abilities to rebuild himself and renewed his medical license in April 1865. By August he was able to buy himself a cow and a calf.³⁰ Until his death in 1892, George Ker was seen as a leader in Northampton County because he was one of the few people the area who were able to recover from the devastation of the Civil War.

Section 8 Page 9

Following his death, his wife maintained the home until she passed away in 1910.³¹ The title of the property was then granted to her daughter Ella Ker who left it to "her friends," Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ailworth.³² Mr. Ailworth was a staunch Democrat who took advantage of living in the county seat and received an appointment as United States Marshall for the Eastern District of Virginia.³³ Mr.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

Ailworth continued to be a very prosperous and influential figure in Eastville society. Since 1952, two daughters of the Ailworth family have heired the property. They each have managed the farm and kept Cessford in good condition.

The property is significant under criterion A for the role it played during the Civil War from 1862 to 1865 as the commandeered residence of Union Brigadier General Henry H. Lockwood. It was also during this time that the driving force behind Dr. Ker's plantation were given freedom. Once Lockwood posted that these slaves could no longer be held, he challenged the course of Dr. Ker's life in Eastville.

Criteria C: That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Cessford remains today much as it has for over 170 years. Believed to have been constructed c. 1832 for John Kerr, this two and a half story, Federal home was constructed of solid Flemish bond brick walls. Several federal style features including the flat wooden lintels topping the nine over nine wooden-double-hung sash windows distinguish the home. Wooden shutters flank these windows. A stately porch featuring a brick floor with wooden Doric columns and pilasters under a heavy pediment covers the rectangular door surround featuring a transom and sidelights, which display a semi-circular design. A brick arch supports the entire porch. The gable roof is covered with slate, which was put on in the 1930s, replacing the original cypress shakes.³⁴

The interior of the home has retained a significant amount of its original fabric. The original simple carving remains throughout with all of the interior doorframes having narrow horizontal fluting ending with the bulls-eye.³⁵ The back of the parlor door features its original faux-graining. The mantels are simple with rounded columns at each side with horizontal fluting across the face except for a circular decoration at each side. The wallpaper and border in the parlor purchased in 1859 remains on the wall.³⁶

Section _8_ Page _10_

The west section of Cessford was added sometime after the completion of the main dwelling and contains a large fireplace originally used for cooking and a kitchen. This addition continues the simple wooden lintels with the familiar bulls-eye detailing as seen on the main building with a plain lintel below.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

Directly west of the main home are several of the original outbuildings including a smokehouse, a quarter kitchen and an utility/out-building. These are all contributing structures to the property. The smokehouse rests on a foot high brick foundation and is constructed of beaded weatherboards with a gable roof. The smokehouse has retained its original trough to hold the salt while curing and fire ring in the center to smoke the meats. Nails and hooks on the heavy rafters still remain for hanging the meat for smoking and final storage.

The one and a half story quarter kitchen features a massive freestanding chimney on the west side. The chimney follows the wall up for about five feet and then separates from the wall for a 3 brick width space. The fireplace in the front room is far larger than the one in the mansion. The stairway to the second floor room no longer exists. The interior was “renovated” ca. 1948.³⁷ The original window and door framing that is visible is very plain and utilitarian.

The utility building stands on brick supports and is boarded with very wide wooden boards. The front façade has a wide door, which extends to ground level. Nothing remains within besides nails and hooks on the upright supports. It is said to have housed chickens or other small animals when the complex was in use.³⁸

Cessford has retained a majority of its original features, with only minor changes occurring as modern conveniences were added such as three bathrooms and the alteration of the kitchen in the post construction addition to the home. The accompanying original outbuildings create an overall atmosphere that tell the story of a nineteenth century plantation. John Kerr built a simple yet elegant manor home in Eastville, Northampton County’s seat and quickly staked his place in society.

Following his death, his son George Ker continued to build their plantation while managing a successful medical practice. He maintained the family’s prominence in the town until the Union army began occupying the Eastern Shore and he fled with is family to North Carolina entrusting his home to a family friend. During the Union occupation Brigadier General Henry H. Lockwood commandeered Cessford to be his home while stationed in Eastville. During this occupation

Section _8_ Page _11_

General Lockwood released Dr. Ker’s slaves as ordered by President Abraham Lincoln. When George Ker returned to Cessford in 1865, he immediately set out rebuilding his estate and was able to again become a prominent citizen. The home was passed to the Ailworth family by Dr. Ker’s daughter and remains in their care today. Cessford bears significance under criterion A for its roll during the Union occupation of the Eastern Shore and criterion C for its remarkable architectural

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

integrity.

Sections __7&8__ Page __12__

Endnotes

¹ Dames and Moore, *Historic Architectural Survey; Settlements, Villages, and Towns of Northampton County, Virginia* (1996): Appendix E, 6

² Whitelaw: 242.

³ John Kerr. Notation Book. "Cessford", Mrs. A.T. Dix Kerr Papers. Archives Department Kerr Place. Eastern Shore Historical Society: Onancock, VA 23417. Archives #1997.010.630

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

⁴ John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture*. (Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1972): 87.

⁵ Whitelaw: 242.

⁶ H. Chandlee Forman, *The Virginia Eastern Shore and Its British Origins*. (Easton, MD: Eastern Shore Publishers' Associates, 1975): 187.

⁷ Whitelaw: 242; Archives # 1991.010.1200 and 1224.

⁸ Doris Adler, *Kerr Papers 1812-1865*. Unpublished manuscript: 209.

⁹ Archives #1997.010.1263

¹⁰ Dix, interview.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jean M. Mihalyka, Compiler, *Bible Records of Accomack and Northampton Counties, VA*. (Eastville, VA: Clerk's Office) Vol. 7: 176-8.

¹³ Dix, interview.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ker Papers; Archive # 1997.010.1250

¹⁶ Forman: 187.

¹⁷ Dix, Interview.

¹⁸ DB29: 610-614, Northampton County, Virginia

¹⁹ Petitions to the General Assembly – Northampton County, Va. Eastern Shore Public Library, E.S. Room; Film File, Drawer 1, Microfilm 1776-1826.

²⁰ Dames and Moore: Appendix E, 6

²¹ Ibid.

²² Dr. Ker dropped the final 'R' from his name in the 1850's. His brothers did not do so.

²³ Susie M. Ames, "Federal Policy on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 1861." *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (October 1961).

²⁴ Adler: 245.

²⁵ Frances B. Latimer, Compiler, *Running the Blockade*. (Eastville, VA: Hickory House, 2002): 21.

²⁶ Ibid. 22.

²⁷ Adler: 246-7.

²⁸ Order of Requiring Cessford, by Lockwood

²⁹ Mihalyka, Bible Records, Vol. 7: 176-8.

³⁰ Ker Papers: Archives #'s 1997.010.1363 and 1997.010.1369

³¹ Jean M. Mihalyka, Compiler, *Gravestone Inscriptions in Northampton County, VA*. (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library, 1984): 103.

Sections 7&8 Page 13

Endnotes, Continued

³² Whitelaw: 242.

³³ Dix, Interview.

³⁴ Kerr papers. Archives #1997.010.630

³⁵ Whitelaw: 242.

³⁶ Archives #1997.010.1263

³⁷ Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia

³⁸ Ibid.

Section 9 Page 14

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

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Petitions to the General Assembly – Northampton County, Va. Eastern Shore Public Library,
E.S. Room; Film File, Drawer 1, Microfilm 1776-1826.

Section __10__ Page __16__

Verbal Boundary Description

The eastern border of the five-acre site is Courthouse Road. To the east of this road are five lots. These lots were never a part of the Cessford acreage. The southern boundary is the drainage ditch, which separates the property from an adjacent owner. The western boundary is the east mound of dirt from the irrigation pond owned by Mrs. Ellen S. Dix. The northern boundary is the property line of an adjacent owner. The fields to the south and west are in cultivation as they have been from the c. 1832 purchase of the Cessford tract.

Boundary Justification

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**

Only five acres is being submitted for this nomination because it is the land that Mrs. Ellen Dix owns outright. This five acre portion includes all of the buildings and structures, which are concerned in this nomination: the mansion, and addition known as Cessford, the remaining buildings of domestic and agricultural use, as well as the garden and enough surrounding land to provide a buffer offering contextual integrity.

Section __10__ Page _17__

Photograph Key

Mary Taylor took the following photographs of Cessford, numbers 1-13, in June 2003. The negatives for these photographs are filed at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources under negative number 20644.

1. Exterior, South Façade
2. Exterior, Looking Northwest
3. Exterior, Northeast Corner
4. Exterior, Looking Northwest
5. Interior, Looking Northeast, Original Mantel and Original Wallpaper from 1859
6. Interior, East Bedchamber
7. Interior, West Fireplace in Addition with Original Metal Pot Holders
8. Interior, Looking North at Door Transoms and Sidelights
9. Exterior, Garden Looking South
10. Exterior, Looking Northwest at Utility House and Quarter Kitchen
11. Exterior, Looking North at Quarter Kitchen
12. Exterior, Looking North at Utility House
13. Exterior, Looking West at Smoke House

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(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Cessford
Northampton County, Virginia**
